

**Thomas Jefferson to William Duane, March 22, 1806,
The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes.
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Ford.**

TO WILLIAM DUANE J. MSS.

Washington, March 22, 06.

I thank you, my good Sir, cordially, for your letter of the 12, which however I did not receive till the 20th. It is a proof of sincerity, which I value above all things; as, between those who practise it, falsehood & malice work their efforts in vain. There is an enemy somewhere endeavoring to sow discord among us. Instead of listening first, then doubting, & lastly believing anile tales handed round without an atom of evidence, if my friends will address themselves to me directly, as you have done, they shall be informed with frankness and thankfulness. There is not a truth on earth which I fear or would disguise. But secret slanders cannot be disarmed, because they are secret. Although you desire no answer, I shall give you one to those articles admitting a short answer, reserving those which require more explanation than the compass of a letter admits, to conversation on your arrival here. And as I write this for your personal satisfaction, I rely that my letter will, under no circumstances, be communicated to any mortal, because you well know how every syllable from me is distorted by the ingenuity of my political enemies.

In the 1st. place, then, I have had less communication, directly or indirectly, with the republicans of the east, this session, than I ever had before. This has proceeded from accidental circumstances, not from design. And if there be any coolness between those of the south & myself, it has not been from me towards them. Certainly there has been no other reserve than to avoid taking part in the divisions among our friends. That Mr. R.

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has openly attacked the administration is sufficiently known. We were not disposed to join in league with Britain, under any belief that she is fighting for the liberties of mankind, & to enter into war with Spain, & consequently France. The H. of Repr. were in the same sentiment, when they rejected Mr. R.'s resolutions for raising a body of regular troops for the Western service. We

are for a peaceable accommodation with all those nations, if it can be effected honorably. This, perhaps, is not the only ground of his alienation; but which side retains its orthodoxy, the vote of 87. to 11. republicans may satisfy you; but you will better satisfy yourself on coming here, where alone the true state of things can be known, and where you will see republicanism as solidly embodied on all essential points, as you ever saw it on any occasion.

That there is only one minister who is not opposed to me, is totally unfounded. There never was a more harmonious, a more cordial administration, nor ever a moment when it has been otherwise. And while differences of opinion have been always rare among us, I can affirm, that as to present matters, there was not a single paragraph in my message to Congress, or those supplementary to it, in which there was not an unanimity of concurrence in the members of the administration. The fact is, that in ordinary affairs every head of a department consults me on those of his department, & where anything arises too difficult or important to be decided between us, the consultation becomes general.

That there is an ostensible cabinet and a concealed one, a public profession & concealed counteraction, is false.

That I have denounced republicans by the epithet of Jacobins, and declared I would appoint none but those called moderates of both parties, & that I have avowed or entertain any predilection for those called the third party, or Quids, is in every tittle of it false.

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That the expedition of Miranda was countenanced by me, is an absolute falsehood, let it have gone from whom it might; & I am satisfied it is equally so as to Mr. Madison. To know as much of it as we could was our duty, but not to encourage it.

Our situation is difficult; & whatever we do is liable to the criticisms of those who wish to represent it awry. If we recommend measures in a public message, it may be said that members are not sent here to obey the mandates of the President, or to register the edicts of a sovereign. If we express opinions in conversation, we have then our Charles Jenkinsons, & back-door counsellors. If we say nothing, “we have no opinions, no plans, no cabinet.” In truth it is the fable of the old man, his son & ass, over again.

These are short facts which may suffice to inspire you with caution, until you can come here & examine for yourself. No other information can give you a true insight into the state of things; but you will have no difficulty in understanding them when on the spot. In the meantime, accept my friendly salutations & cordial good wishes.